GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1930
ANSWERED ON:29.11.2001
POOR QUALITY AMMUNITION PRODUCTION
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Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether poor quality in development and manufacture of barrels of T-72 tanks, Grad Rockets and 105 M.M. anti-tank ammunition have led to rejection and idle inventory costing over Rs. 131 crore loss;

(b) if so, the reasons for malproduction;

(c) whether any enquiry has been conducted by the Government in this regard; and

(d) if so, the outcome thereof and the action taken against the errant officials?

Answer

MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES)

(a) to (d): A Statement is attached.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1930 29.11.2001.

Development and manufacture of T-72 tank barrels

1. Defects in barrels manufactured for T-72 tanks have been noticed although indigenous manufacture of 125mm gun barrels for T-72 tanks has been established in Ordnance Factories in accordance with the technology regime of the collaborators (erstwhile Soviet Union) and under the supervision of specialists of the collaborators. The deviations in the critical heat treatment schedule were made in consultation and with the approval of the collaborators and the same recorded in the form of a Protocol between Ordnance Factory Board and Collaborators.

2. Consequent upon failure of some of the barrels, investigations were taken up in association with the Russian specialists which is being further pursued by constituting an Expert Committee comprising of Specialists from Director General Quality Assurance, Defence Research & Development Organisation, Ordnance Factory Board and Mishra Dhatu Nigam Ltd which is continuing intensive studies. Measures for salvaging 559 barrels (manufactured with deviated heat treatment process) withdrawn from active usage are also being studied.

Development and manufacture of 122 M.M. Grad Rockets

3. The design of the store developed by DRDO has been proved to be marginal and as such production had to be suspended leading to blocked inventory to the tune of Rs. 18 crores. Details have been furnished to DRDO, who have been conducting investigations and trials to make best use of the available inventory, but trials have not been conclusive.

4. An internal Board of Enquiry constituted by OFB on the blocked inventories has concluded that :-

(a) Factories had taken due care before stocking these items and avoiding any further addition to the inventory after the production was suspended.

(b) The non-utilisation of the existing inventory took place due to drastic change in qualitative requirements suddenly demanded by the Army.

Development and manufacture of 105mm FSAPDS ammunition

5. This ammunition was developed by DRDO and production was started only after successful user trials. There has been rejection beyond permissible limit due to marginal design. The blocked inventory is to the tune of Rs. 22.98 Crores, High Alloy Penetrating Project (HAPP), Trichy are exploring the possibility of utilising Aluminium alloy lots for 125mm FSAPDS to reduce the financia repercussion.